

I AM Navy Medicine

RSS : Posts Comments

NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS HEALTH CARE • 2011 & 2012 WINNER OF BEST NAVY BLOG

HomeAboutDisclaimerNavy Medicine NewsNavy Medicine WebSiteI AM Navy Medicine

Written on JANUARY 25, 2012 AT 7:41 AM by PROSS

# Taking Mental Health to the Front Line

Filed under UNCATEGORIZED

(2 COMMENTS)

By Capt. Scott L. Johnston, director, Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control



Capt. Scott L. Johnston, director,  
Naval Center for Combat and  
Operational Stress Control

An exciting initiative is under way throughout the Marine Corps which recognizes that some of the most important “therapy” for psychological health problems is provided by battlefield buddies.

With OSCAR – Operational Stress Control and Readiness — it’s a support team of a fellow Marine, a chaplain, a Navy physician or a mental health provider who has trained, fought and returned home with a unit. These men have shared significant events and have built tight bonds.

In its most simple form, OSCAR is an early-detection program. The first team member is a small-unit leader, known as a mentor, who has been trained to recognize stress in a fellow Marine. It’s this Marine’s job to provide peer support.

Mentors are strong role models who have a sincere desire to help others. Many stress-related issues

are resolved at this level, just by talking things over and learning ways to look at a problem in a different, more positive manner.

If more help is needed, the mentor can refer a Marine to what’s known as an OSCAR extender, who might be a Navy medical officer, corpsman or a chaplain. Extenders bridge the gap between mentors and the next level of the OSCAR team, the provider.

OSCAR providers are Navy mental health professionals who have spent a significant portion of their time embedded with their units both in garrison and in field training evolutions. With this background, the providers are more than just “medical assets.” They are known to unit personnel through day-to-day contact and they have an understanding of mission requirements throughout the deployment cycle. They have built up a level of trust.

I personally have seen the power of such a program during two deployments to Iraq with Marine units that fought in Ramadi and Fallujah: 95 percent of those whom I assisted returned to duty – an impressive statistic by any standard.

The Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (NCCOSC) is supporting

## Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

## Navy Medicine Social Media

Follow us on Twitter

Join us on Facebook

Read our publications

View our photo stream

Watch our videos

## Navy Medicine Live Archives

March 2015 (4)

February 2015 (16)

January 2015 (12)

December 2014 (17)

OSCAR by helping to develop a program training curriculum for providers. It is an exciting undertaking because OSCAR is helping many Marines with stress problems before they become stress crises. And as important, the program is another example of the storied Marine Corps tradition of taking care of its own.

← Next post

Previous post →

Dion Matriscino, LCSW  
As a former Navy Hospital Corpsman who served on the USS Moosbrugger DD980 and in the Reserves (FMF) with the 4th Field Service Support Group and for nearly twenty years as a civilian clinical social worker, I believe you and OSCAR have and will save lives.  
NCCOSC should develop that program training curriculum.

singapore photographer  
Thanks for that awesome posting. It saved MUCH time 😊

November 2014 (11)
October 2014 (15)
September 2014 (20)
August 2014 (14)
July 2014 (13)
June 2014 (8)
May 2014 (11)
April 2014 (9)
March 2014 (14)
February 2014 (7)
January 2014 (7)
December 2013 (7)
November 2013 (12)
October 2013 (7)
September 2013 (14)
August 2013 (13)
July 2013 (11)
June 2013 (22)
May 2013 (15)
April 2013 (14)
March 2013 (14)
February 2013 (14)
January 2013 (12)
December 2012 (11)
November 2012 (11)
October 2012 (7)
September 2012 (9)
August 2012 (12)
July 2012 (13)
June 2012 (17)
May 2012 (22)
April 2012 (14)
March 2012 (13)
February 2012 (14)
January 2012 (13)
December 2011 (13)
November 2011 (20)
October 2011 (22)
September 2011 (12)